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ENGLAND'S
LAST QUEEN.

Ed. Wallace



ENGLAND'S



LAST QUEEN.

A POEM FOR PARLOR AND OFFICE,

BY THE AUTHOR OF "STRIFE."

NEW YORK :

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ENGLAND'S LAST QUEEN.

BY MRS. E. D. WALLACE.

"As we entered the barge our loquacious rower directed our attention to Her Majesty's barge, on its way to Hampton Court Palace. The pathetic air of the boatman as he related a little incident, that may or may not be true, affected my already wearied spirits, and all the way down the Thames I reverberated over the picture he had drawn of the poor Queen's sorrow till it assumed the vividness of a prophetic vision. Take it as it is, for the sake of the sentiment."

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1871, by

Mrs. E. D. WALLACE,

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ENGLAND'S LAST QUEEN.

I.

"Top of the tide, Mum ! Beautiful water !"

"None but a waterman says it, I ween."

Half angered, half wistfully queried the boatman.

But dreamed not he gazed in the face of the
Queen.

II.

"A strange mood is in her," the ladies had
whispered,

When suddenly rising, "We may not restrain
Such grief!" she exclaimed, but no tears

Dimmed her eyes, as she bade them remain

III.

In the Audience Chamber—the Chamber of
Horrors

To her, when, in all the gay throng, only one
Form she saw—and that form a shadow,

A pale, mocking shadow of him that was gone.

IV.

So abruptly that morning she left them,
Her ladies and children, and hastened away,
Well knowing however her wishes were slighted,
The royal command none would dare disobey.

V.

Poor widow! great Queen! ah! the first was
she that day.
The humblest peasant in all her wide realm
Knew not such poverty, such craving hunger,
As threatened her reason itself to o'erwhelm.

VI.

"Only to see him and hear him one moment."
That was the longing she could not repress;
That was the burden of all her complaining.
These simple words told a great Queen's
distress.

VII.

“No one to call me VICTORIA ; no one
 To shield from the arrows of envy and hate;
 No one for love’s sake, when counsel is needed,
 To guide and uphold through the weary
 debate.”

VIII.

“For years of devotion and service beseeching
 But hours and moments of gracious relief
 From pageants and cares, my prayers are rejected
 With jeers for indulgence in vain, selfish
 grief!”

IX.

Oh, England! you boast of your strength and
 your prestige,
 In sackcloth and ashes for this sin atone;
 For what other nation enlightened as you are
 Makes pitiless war on one woman alone?

X.

'You're teaching the Prince to despise the Queen-mother.

Have a care! for each stroke that recoils with
a spring,
While smiting her breast, may yet mould for
your future
An obdurate heart in a vindictive King.

XI.

But hear what the people, your compeers, are
saying—

These people through Parliament's traitors
have seen—

"All hail! to the great heart that has been and
shall be

REGINA VICTORIA; but—*England's last Queen!*"

XII.

"Top of the tide, Mum! Beautiful water!"

"None but a waterman says it, I ween."

Half angered, half wistfully queried the boatman,
But dreamed not he gazed in the face of the
Queen.

XIII.

A barge decked with flags and gay ribands
streamed by them.

“Whose barge may that be?” she bethought
her to say.

“The Queen’s, Mum, God bless her; and long
may Old England

Be ruled by the Queen who reigns o’er us
to-day!”

XIV.

Sweet tears! let them flow; Oh, woman and
widow!

Nor fear that the boatman will mock at your
grief,

Nor the tremulous joy that is stirred in your
bosom,

Long barred from the sympathy now your
relief.

XV.

Her smile, when he called the notorious river—

The black, murky Thames—a beautiful stream,
He forgot, nor thought, when the barge had
passed by them,

To protect his bared head from the sun’s
scorching beam.

XVI.

He looked at the sad woman weeping before
him,

Looked after the royal barge gliding along,
And whispered: "Ah, Madame, Her Majesty's
sorrows

Have left us no heart for the 'Waterman's
Song.'"

XVII.

"But why is the royal barge flaunting with
ribands,

And why are the bargemen so gaily attired?"

"The Prince Consort's orders, Mum. Nobles'
and subjects'

Respect for her birthdays he always required."

XVIII.

She entered the barge; bade the boatman row
swiftly

Till evening threw round her its own dusky
veil.

"I may not so enter the palace," she murmured;
The guards must not see my face tear stained
and pale."

XIX.

The sun slowly sinking illumined a fountain
 Where silver and golden fish came at the call
 Of children, who shouted with glee at their haste
 To secure the sweet morsels abundant for all.

XX.

The sunset was regal, as round his couch
 gathered,
 Like pale, spectral mourners, the fair, fleecy
 clouds ;
 No drapery bordered with blue or with amber,
 But clothed in pure white like the dead in
 their shrouds.

XXI.

Yet scarce had the sun-god been veiled from
 her vision—
 The Queen's—who regarded this royal death
 scene
 As a type, it may be, of the hour approaching
 When she too must die, though a mother and
 Queen.

XXII.

The last look scarce given, when lo! all these
watchers

In purple and crimson and gold were arrayed.
"He leaves them the riches they prize, though
reflecting

No glory on him o'er whose wealth they have
preyed."

XXIII.

So murmured the Queen; and the children
laughed gaily,

For over the fountain that last golden beam
Threw a light that revealed the fish still in
commotion

To secure the last crumb falling into the ream.

XXIV.

"The children are happy, nor dream that I
grudge them

That one golden ray to stream over the walls
Of the palace which Time—no respecter of
persons—

Preserves not from tempest or rain as it falls.

XXV.

“The masonry crumbled, the sculpture disfigured,
 No gilding—not even the sun’s could adorn—
 But through the stained windows one gleam
 could restore me
 The pride of *my* palace the day I was born.”

XXVI.

Now evening closed round her, and giving the
 bargeman
 A fee for his service, she hurried away
 Towards the palace where torches were flaring
 and streaming
 In search of the Queen “who was missing
 that day.”

XXVII.

“And who may she be?” said the boatman, and
 peered
 Through the dark till no longer her form
 could be seen.
 A voice, like the wail of a spirit in sorrow,
 Sobbed low : “’TIS VICTORIA, ENGLAND’S LAST
 QUEEN.”

STRIKE

A Journal of the

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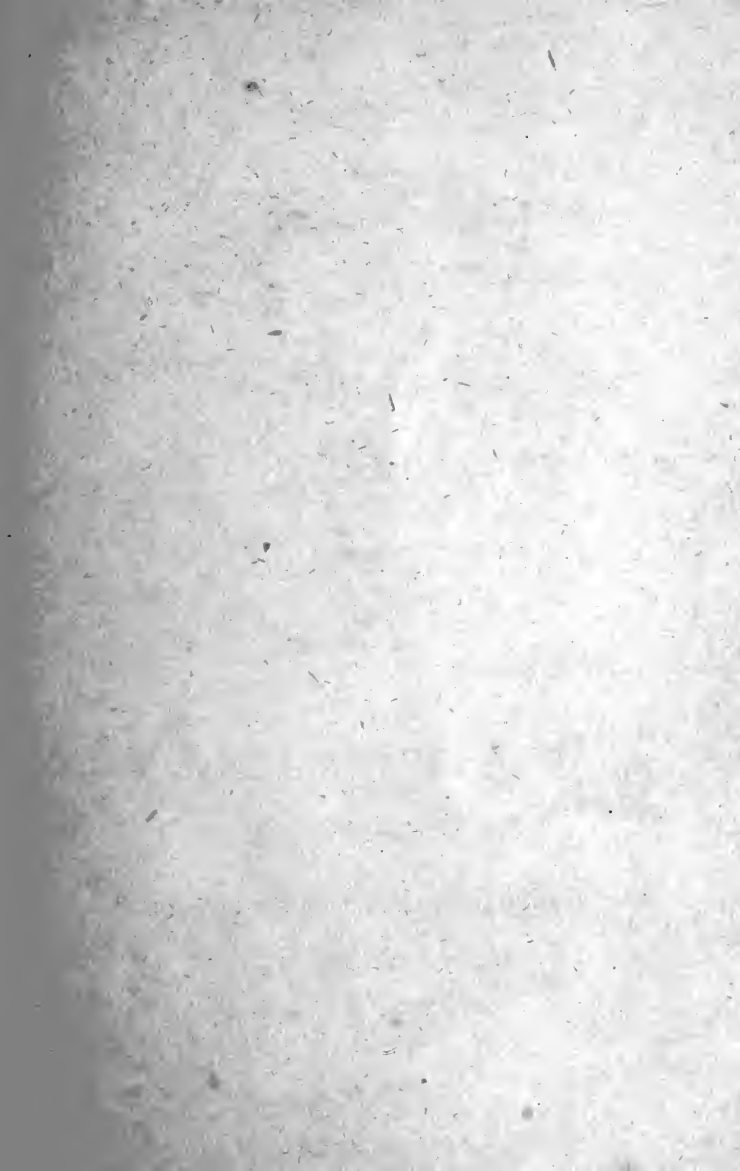
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